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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 17 October 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

We write to express our grave concern and total objection to the illegal unilateral actions that continue to be aggressively perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In flagrant contradiction of all relevant provisions of international law and of the efforts being exerted by the international community to revive the peace process, Israel continues its rabid settlement campaign, colonizing the Territory and harming the chances for a resumption of the political process.

On Friday, 14 October 2011, Israel, the occupying Power, authorized the construction of 2,610 illegal settlement units in the Beit Safafa neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem. This plan is part of an ongoing Israeli effort to expand the illegal settlements in Occupied East Jerusalem at an unprecedented rate. The illegal settlement "Givat Hamatos" is of particularly grave concern, as its expansion will complete the cordon of illegal settlements built by the occupying Power around East Jerusalem in an attempt to sever its connection with the rest of the West Bank.

We reaffirm that, under international law, all Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and constitute a grave violation of Israel's obligations as an occupying Power. Such actions are also contradictory to Israel's obligations under the road map to freeze all settlement activities. Further, there is an international consensus that these unilateral actions undermine the viability of the two-State solution and constitute a serious obstacle to peace. In this regard, we view Israel's insistence on colonizing the Palestinian land by expanding the settlement regime as a clear indication that this Government is neither committed to peace nor willing to respect international law, including United Nations resolutions.

Clearly, the latest Israeli settlement announcement is not an isolated event, as reflected in our recent letters to you on this matter and the relevant reports of United Nations bodies and agencies. The construction of approximately 30,000 new

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settlement housing units in Occupied East Jerusalem is either ongoing or in the final planning stages. Such illegal actions are clearly aimed at altering the status, character and demographic composition of the occupied city. Indeed, in addition to illegally confiscating land and constructing settlements, Israel continues to apply a host of other illegal measures aimed at driving out the indigenous Palestinian population, including the demolition of homes (the occupying Power has demolished at least 31 Palestinian residential buildings, leaving 106 Palestinian civilians, including 61 children, homeless since the start of this year), the revocation of residency rights, the continued closure of Palestinian institutions in the city and the recent decision to ban social activists from travelling to other parts of the West Bank, effectively severing them from their work and familial relations with their natural surroundings.

Today, I must also call your attention once again to the critical situation of Palestinian prisoners as a result of the ongoing hunger strike, entered into on 27 September 2011 in protests of the punitive and illegal measures taken against them by the occupying Power, foremost of which the solitary confinement policy. Most regrettably, the health situation of the prisoners participating in the hunger strike, today in its twenty-first day, has gravely deteriorated. We express our serious concern for the prisoners' well-being and fear for the lives of some of them, such as Ahmad Saadat, who is said to be gravely ill. Mr. Saadat has been kept in solitary confinement since 2006 and, like many of the prisoners, has already lost over 10 kg during the hunger strike.

We hold Israel, the occupying Power, fully responsible for the lives and well-being of all the Palestinian prisoners who have resorted to this peaceful measure of protest against Israel's extreme abuse and intransigence. We call on the international community to take all possible measures, in accordance with international law, to compel the occupying Power to halt its illegal measures and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners and to urgently allow access to the Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and detention centres to ensure that they are receiving proper medical care and are not forced to endure inhumane treatment and conditions.

Persistent Israeli violations of international law, United Nations resolutions and all international commitments made, particularly through the destructive settlement campaign throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continue to poison the environment between the two sides and, if not ceased, will sabotage the efforts to resume the political progress aimed at achieving the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. The contiguity and integrity of the Territory is being marred with every passing day by these illegal Israeli policies and practices, as is the viability of the two-State solution itself. The time for action by the international community to reverse this downward spiral is now, and we urge all concerned, including the Security Council, to uphold the law and their responsibilities before the prospects for peace slip even further.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 406 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 October 2011 (A/ES-10/534-S/2011/629) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State

terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations